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ABSTRACT

This case study illustrates one of the challenges faced by a new principal, that of reconciling one's emerging skills and understanding to an idiosyncratic school culture. This paper describes how a new principal at a troubled Chicago elementary school handled resistance to change and animosity from a group of "old guard" teachers in her efforts to initiate school improvements. She made a decisive but risky change in perspective and strategy, employing a Machiavellian approach to mobilize parental support and actively challenge the power bases of obstructionist teachers. She enlisted the help of sympathetic teachers and set out to gain control in the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), the teachers' union, and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Findings demonstrate the importance of gaining the support of parents, teachers, and other administrators; the value of setting clear goals for improvement; and the need for persistence despite the slow pace of change. (LMI)

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The Prince and the Principal

Case Study #1

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NCEL OCCASIONAL PAPER AND CASE SERIES

OP#1 ***Re-Thinking School Leadership: An Agenda for Research and Reform*** **by Lee G. Bolman, Susan Moore Johnson, Jerome T. Murphy, and Carol H. Weiss; Harvard University (February 1990), 42 pages**

This paper presents a basic model of the relationship between leadership, situation, and outcomes. Personal characteristics of leaders and the situation in which leaders find themselves both influence what leaders do, which in turn influences the kinds of outcomes that they produce. Embedded in the model are three questions: "What is good school leadership?" "How does good school leadership come about?" and "What will good school leadership mean in the future?" Systematic ways of approaching these questions are also presented.

OP#2 ***Preparing School Administrators for the Twenty-First Century: The Reform Agenda*** **by Joseph Murphy; Vanderbilt University (May 1990), 47 pages**

In the second wave of school reform reports and studies of the 1980s, much attention has been directed to issues of school administration and leadership. Yet, to date, no comprehensive analysis of these calls for changes in school administration has been undertaken. The purpose of this paper is to provide such a review. The goals of the paper are threefold: (1) to explain the reasons for the calls for reform of school administration, (2) to review the major studies and reports on education reform from 1982 to 1988 and (3) to discuss educational administration reform issues that need further attention.

OP#3 ***What Makes a Difference? School Context, Principal Leadership, and Student Achievement*** **by Philip Hallinger, Leonard Bickman, and Ken Davis; Vanderbilt University (June 1990), 35 pages**

This paper addresses the general question, what makes a difference in school learning? We report the results of a secondary analysis of data collected as part of the Tennessee School Improvement Incentives Project. We utilized the instructional leadership model developed by researchers at the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development to guide our analyses. This conceptual model makes provision for analysis of principal leadership in relation to features of the school environment, school-level organization, and student outcomes. The paper focuses on the following research questions: (1) What antecedents appear to influence principal leadership behavior? (2) What impact does principal leadership have on the organization and its outcomes? (3) To what extent is the Far West Lab's instructional leadership framework supported empirically by the data collected in this study?

OP#4 ***School Restructuring: A Case Study In Teacher Empowerment*** **by Katherine C. Boles; Harvard University (September 1990), 58 pages**

School districts around the country are in the process of initiating projects to restructure their schools. A small but growing number of these restructuring projects have been initiated by teachers, but as yet little has been written documenting the experience of classroom practitioners involved in such efforts. The purpose of this study is to add teachers' voices to the literature on restructuring. This project restructured a portion of a school and altered the work of a group of third and fourth grade teachers.

OP#5 ***Educational Reform in the 1980s: Explaining Some Surprising Success*** **by Joseph Murphy; Vanderbilt University (September 1990), 28 pages**

In this paper issues of success and failure of reform initiatives are discussed from both sides of the aisle. The paper begins with a review of the financial, political, and organizational factors which normally support the position that reform measures are likely to result in few substantive improvements. Next, the argument is made that educational reform recommendations have been surprisingly successful, and some speculations as to the reasons for this unexpected outcome are presented.

OP#6 ***New Settings and Changing Norms for Principal Development*** **by Philip Hallinger; Vanderbilt University and Robert Wimpelberg; University of New Orleans (January 1991), 32 pages**

Recently analysts have identified a variety of features that distinguish emerging administrative training programs from traditional ones. The rapid, but non-systematic growth in organizations providing administrative development services during the 1980's led to considerable natural variation in programmatic content as well as in organizational processes. In particular, significant variations emerged in the operation of state-sponsored leadership academies and local principals' centers. The purpose of this paper is to analyze variations in current approaches to educational leadership development. The paper addresses three questions: (1) What is the range of variation among emerging staff development programs for school leaders on dimensions of program content and organizational process? (2) What can we learn from the naturally occurring variations in administrative development? (3) What are the most likely and promising directions for administrative development programs in the next decade?

OP#7 ***Images of Leadership*** **by Lee G. Bolman; Harvard University and Terrence E. Deal; Vanderbilt University (January 1991), 21 pages**

This project has undertaken a major study of the "frames," or orientations, that leaders use to guide their understanding of their work. The investigators have developed a set of survey instruments to measure four leadership orientations (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic), and collected data from leaders and their constituents in both education and the private sector. Their research results show that the four leadership orientations do capture significant elements of how leaders approach their task, and that those leadership variables are significantly associated with effectiveness. The results further show that the variables which predict effectiveness as a *manager* are different from those that predict effectiveness as a *leader*. In particular, structural and rational orientations are primarily predictive of manager effectiveness. This research was reported at the AERA meeting in April, 1990.

OP#8 ***Trouble in Paradise: Teacher Conflicts in Shared Decision Making*** **by Carol H. Weiss, Joseph Cambone, and Alexander Wyeth; Harvard University (April 1991), 26 pages**

Many educators advocate teacher participation in school decision-making as one strategy for improving schools. Through interviews with teachers and administrators in high schools that have adopted some version of shared decision making, the authors locate both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages center on great commitment and "ownership" of decisions. Disadvantages include, besides heavy time demands, the necessity for teachers to confront and negotiate with each other, a process that requires skills many teachers lack. There may also be conflicts with administrators, often because of unclear definitions of authority and responsibility. Suggestions are made for overcoming such problems.

OP#9 ***Restructuring Schools: Fourteen Elementary and Secondary Teachers' Perspectives on Reform*** **by Joseph Murphy, Carolyn M. Evertson, and Mary L. Radnofsky; Vanderbilt University (May 1991), 34 pages**

Few efforts have been made to inject classroom teachers' voices into discussions on restructuring. In this article, we report on one exploratory study that begins to address this oversight. We interviewed 14 teachers from diverse backgrounds about their views on the restructuring movement in general. We wanted to hear what they thought of the concept and to determine what effects they anticipated in restructuring schools. We also elicited their perceptions about what changes they would make in both the schools and classrooms if they were thrust into a school undergoing restructuring. We found that, while in some ways the views of these teachers were consistent with prevailing perspectives in the restructuring movement, in other cases, their preferences were at odds with the general body of literature on restructuring. We concluded that, while these teachers are optimistic about the possibilities of fundamental school reform, they remain skeptical about their ability to change the current educational system.

OP#10 ***The Effects of the Educational Reform Movement on Departments of Educational Leadership*** **by Joseph Murphy; Vanderbilt University (May 1991), 34 pages**

This paper reviews the types of revisions that preparation programs in educational leadership have begun to make in response to three related sets of pressures brought on by the reform movement of the 1980s: pressures bearing on school administrators from the larger reform agenda, i.e., improving education across the board; general critiques of and calls for improvement in educational leadership; and specific analyses and demands for change in administrator preparation programs. The results are based on questionnaires completed by 74 chairpersons in departments of educational leadership. The emerging picture is mixed. On the one hand, departments of educational administration have begun to respond to the pressures for change. In addition, for better or worse, discernable patterns in these revisions are generally consistent with the implicit demands for improvement that lace the critical reviews of the field and with the more explicit recommendations contained in the NPBEA and NCEEA reform reports. On the other hand, the response has been moderate (at best) in intensity and mixed in focus.

OP#11 ***A Typology of the Assistant Principal: A Model of Orientation to the Administrative Career*** **by Catherine Marshall; Vanderbilt University, Barbara Mitchell; School District of Philadelphia, and Richard Gross; Boyertown Senior High School, Pennsylvania (June 1991), 30 pages**

This paper describes the working lives of twenty assistant principals, exploring the interactions between personal values and organizational contexts. School districts' individual norms and traditions present unique conditions, restraints, and possibilities for these new administrators, who respond in a variety of ways. The study identifies five distinct career orientations, linking the administrators' early socialization experiences and their eventual mobility. This typology, derived from a variety of case studies, provides a basis for structuring recruitment, training, support, and selection practices for aspirants to administrative careers. This approach can inform school districts' approaches to staff development as well as individuals' career choices.

OP#12 ***The Cultural Chasm Between Administrator and Teacher Cultures: A Micropolitical Puzzle by Catherine Marshall; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (in press), 26 pages***

This paper examines the complex relationships between teachers and school administrators from a micropolitical perspective. Public schools have long enforced a bureaucratic separation of roles, professional status, socialization, and training, leading to value conflicts and factionalism. The move from teaching to administration can be especially traumatic, involving alienation from one peer group and gradual acceptance into another. Through analysis of interviews with new administrators, the authors explore the underlying causes of these conflicts and shifts in perspective. To what extent do teachers and administrators differ in their understandings of school culture? How do new school leaders acquire the political skills and attitudes inherent to administration, and how do these attitudes affect interactions with teachers?

OP#13 ***Developing the Thinking Strategies of Instructional Leaders by Philip Hallinger; Vanderbilt University, C.E. McCary; Durham North Carolina Schools (in press), 25 pages***

In light of the critical role that principals play in school improvement, the inadequacy of current principal preparation presents a major problem for policy and practice. This article examines emerging research on instructional leadership and call for leadership training that emphasizes strategic thinking. The authors argue that research must address the reasoning that underlies the exercise of leadership, rather than describe discrete behaviors of effective leaders.

The article includes a description of a computer simulation designed to facilitate the transfer from research to the practice of leadership. The simulation model asks aspiring principals to choose a combination of improvement strategies using research-based cost and benefit information. The authors discuss their experiences with the simulation and offer suggestions for the design and delivery of administrative training and development.

CASE STUDIES

CS#1 ***The Prince and the Principal*** will serve as a powerful discussion piece for aspiring or practicing administrators, as well as for teachers interested in leadership. In it, a new principal begins her tenure at a troubled Chicago elementary school, met with resistance and animosity from a group of "old guard" teachers. Eager to correct what she sees as glaring problems, she feels herself blocked in all efforts to effect positive change, from minor improvements to more significant school restructuring. After a series of frustrations, she makes a decisive but risky change in perspective and strategy. The case focuses on the most difficult challenge faced by new leaders: to reconcile one's emerging skills and understanding to an idiosyncratic school culture. Topics for discussion include: the importance of gaining the support of teachers, parents, and other administrators; the value of setting clear goals for improvement; and the decision to persist despite the slow pace of change.

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The Prince and the Principal (A)

In December 1984, Betty Tyler sat alone on her living room sofa, under the light from the nearby Christmas tree. A year before, the flickering glow might have warmed her heart, but now it seemed weak, as if it struggled to hold back the darkness on the shortest day of the year. A year ago, she remembered, she had been ready to begin an exciting new career as principal of the Florence Elementary School. Now, she wondered if that career was near its end.

Tyler prided herself on not giving in easily. She recalled an incident that had occurred several years earlier, at the end of her twelfth year teaching kindergarten in a Chicago public school. She and her principal had been engaged in an ongoing professional dispute that had finally become unbearable. Rather than obey unacceptable directives from her principal, she had threatened to quit. "You can't," said the principal. "I happen to know that you just bought a new car!" But Tyler was not bluffing. "I'm not a woman you say 'can't' to," she realized. She submitted her resignation the same day.

For the next several years Tyler worked as a sales representative for an educational publishing company, a job that sent her to as many as a dozen schools a day. She became a keen observer, able to sense the mood of a school within moments of entering the building. And as she observed, her knowledge deepened, not only of the interactions among students, teachers, and administrators, but also of the contributions that she could make to improving schools. In her mid-forties -- an age at which many professionals "settle in" and look towards retirement -- Tyler decided to put her knowledge to use. In 1982, she returned to teaching and took the Chicago principal's exam. She taught seventh and eighth graders for a short time, but, once again, she felt frustrated by an unsupportive principal. If she wanted to work in a school that was run well, she thought, she would have to run it herself.

This case was written by Roger Shouse, Darryl Ford, Paula Kleine-Kracht, and Susan Ryan under the general supervision of professor Dan Lortie of the University of Chicago. The development of the case was sponsored by the Center for School Improvement at the University of Chicago, directed by Professor Anthony Bryk. Funding was provided by the Joyce Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust. The case was edited for NCEL by Rafael Heller, Research Assistant, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Tyler first visited the Florence School in December of 1983, shortly after she had been appointed as the new principal. As she searched for the school's office, she was struck by the grim atmosphere that surrounded her. The hallways were dark. Instead of holiday decorations, the walls were adorned with graffiti and litter. Students ran by, laughing and making noise. An angry teacher shouted at them to stop. The Florence school looked to Tyler to be a, "dark, depressing mess."

The office secretary told Tyler that Mr. Anthony, the assistant principal, was meeting with some parents in a "parent room." Tyler walked back down the hall, looking in vain for signs that might contradict her first impression of the school. In the parent room, she found several people lounging in front of a television, enjoying a soap opera, coffee, and junk food. One was Anthony, who looked at Tyler suspiciously and asked, "Can I help you?" After Tyler introduced herself, he responded politely, but seemed cold and uninterested.

Mr. Anthony had long hoped to become Florence's principal, and everyone had expected him to fill the position after the previous principal retired. However, he had twice failed the principals' exam, the second time by only a single point. Discouraged, but determined to obtain a promotion, he had begun the '83-'84 school year as "acting principal." Tyler knew that he might be be a reluctant partner.

In January, 1984, Tyler began her principalship at Florence, with Anthony as her assistant. She worried about getting support from the faculty, but hoped to start out on the right foot. Anthony was to formally introduce her to the teachers at a meeting scheduled for 8:30 A.M. However, at 8:45, people were still trickling in, some bringing coffee, doughnuts, and fast-food breakfasts. The latecomers seemed to attract more attention than did Tyler. The room filled with the sounds of doors clicking open and shut, coffee slurping, and bags rattling. For Tyler, this was the limit.

"Look people!" she spoke forcefully. "Leave your food alone, and put your coffee down. You know 8:30 means 8:30, and I would appreciate your cooperation!"

The room became silent, and, suddenly, Tyler felt embarrassed. After all, only seven or eight people out of thirty were causing problems. This was clearly not the right foot. Yet, it confirmed her first impression of Florence School.

For the next few weeks, Tyler decided to hold back and to observe the situation at Florence more closely. She began to view the school as having an unclear curriculum, outdated and poorly used materials, and a staff that was largely resistant to change or innovation. She often overheard teachers ridiculing their students -- behind the kids' backs as well as to their faces. Corporal punishment was common, with many teachers using paddles and taped-up rulers to maintain order in their classrooms. In fact, "order," rather than "learning," seemed the watchword at Florence.

The staff, however, seemed anything but orderly. Tyler noticed that teachers had no assigned duties outside of teaching. Some spent their free time, and even classtime, gossiping or engaging in private business activities with other teachers. In time, Tyler began to notice a perverse sort of informal structure among the faculty. Teachers argued over parking places and seats in the lunchroom, as if following a "pecking order." A group of eight or nine seemed to reign at the top, controlling the atmosphere of the entire school. As Tyler continued to "lay back and observe," she realized that this group, with Anthony in front, was moving along, trying to undercut her power.

Her suspicion grew when she tried to exercise some control over ECIA (Education Consolidation and Improvement Act) Chapter One funds. ECIA expenditures had to be approved by the Parent Advisory Council, which Anthony had encouraged Tyler not to attend. His implicit message was, "You stay in your office and let us worry about taking care of business!"

Tyler insisted on becoming involved, however. She knew that the school would have to submit a needs assessment, and that there had not yet been an adequate exploration of how the money ought to be spent. Anthony and Florence's "power clique" already had a plan for the money. They wanted to buy a new mimeograph machine with some of the money, and to use the rest to upgrade the parent room and to continue to pay for a "School-Community Representative."

The parent room was, as Tyler knew, little more than a TV room, and the School-Community Representative was one of the people who often sat there watching soap operas. The mimeograph machine was a reasonable request, but it had low priority for Tyler. The school needed to upgrade its curriculum, to buy new materials and

supplies, to motivate students and teachers alike, and to improve the quality of instruction. Tyler regarded the mimeograph machine as just another substitute for creativity and innovation.

One of Tyler's own priorities was to find more computers for the school. After only a couple of months, she had already obtained a small grant to supply a computer room, and she had personally provided in-service computer training for teachers. She tried to persuade teachers to take part in Florence's needs assessment and to make more of an effort to improve the school. She organized committees and held weekend retreats She tried to foster more teacher participation in policymaking, which she hoped would lead to better instruction and a more productive educational environment.

Unfortunately, Tyler began to realize, her actions threatened the traditional leadership structure of the school. It was not just the core group of eight or nine teachers that she had to worry about. Nearly a third of the faculty, including many who had been at Florence since it opened in 1961, were rigid in their views and agendas for the school. As for the rest, if they weren't openly hostile to change, they were generally apathetic, and few seemed interested in making enemies of the "old guard."

The first few months were, for Tyler, a lonely search for support. She received it, to some extent, from the students, who Tyler tried to get to know right away. They seemed starved for attention, which Tyler provided through countless hugs. The school was not a safe place for the children. Anthony's predecessor had spent his last several years coasting to retirement, making little effort to ease the local effects of the turbulent '60s and '70s. The middle-class Black neighborhood of 1961 had eventually given way to the "burn, baby, burn," mentality of gangs like the Blackstone Rangers. Many families moved elsewhere as the area ceded to increasing violence and poverty. Over the years, the school had come to coexist with knives, guns, gangs, and fights.

For a time, Tyler despaired that the students had, "no hope, no dreams, no aspirations, no nothing." She was especially worried by Florence's gang problems. Doors were unlocked during the day, so students and non-students went in and out, smoked marijuana, ran around the neighborhood, and often broke into yards and homes. Teachers refused to monitor the playground, and students often failed to return to school

after recess. After Tyler began to supervise the playground herself, some students presented her with a big pole that she could use to keep the "bad kids" in line. She tied flowers and yarn to it, used it as a baton, and marched around the playground with the children. By giving attention that had never been given before, Tyler felt that she was winning many students over.

Nevertheless, she spent a lot of time running up and down the hall, breaking up fights. The police had to be called in often. On one occasion a student hit her, to which she responded by pressing charges. On another occasion, a big fight broke out across the street from the school, and some students were attacking each other with chains. Tyler grabbed her "baton," ran outside, separated those involved, and marched them back into the school. Parents and police were called, which led to a "flare up" in the school office. Anthony joined those parents who complained angrily about Tyler's actions. She "blew up," told the parents to "shut up," and told Anthony to, "go home now." Afterwards, despite Florence's open campus policy, she placed students under "house arrest," and directed teachers to supervise their students during lunch.

Tyler was startled by her teachers' lack of support for any effort she made to improve the school environment. By June, many in the "old guard" attempted to use the PTA against her, trying to overturn her "house arrest" decision. But the PTA was hardly representative of Florence's parents in general. It consisted of ten teachers and eight parents, many of whom were former students of those teachers. If anything, they represented the informal power structure that Tyler could not seem to budge.

Tyler had come to feel that she could rely on some teachers, including a few who had been at Florence for many years. She encouraged them and others to attend the summer's city-wide Administration Academy, which she hoped would inspire in them a sense of leadership. Soon, though, it became clear that the word was out -- don't do anything that would make Tyler "look good." Only four teachers attended the academy.

The following August, Tyler, and those four teachers swept through the school, scrubbing away graffiti and decorating every wall and bulletin board. They prepared to implement a new, energetic agenda at Florence. When teachers arrived on the first day of school, they were offered a variety of new teaching materials, most of which came

from the Administration Academy. Tyler again wanted the the first staff meeting to set an optimistic, cooperative tone.

It was not to be. From behind the podium, Tyler immediately sensed the hostility. Anthony was sprawled in his chair at the back of the room, with his arms folded across his chest, and a slight smirk on his lips. He seemed to be suggesting, "I dare you to try to run this school." In the middle of the room, a large group of teachers sat sideways, talking to others seated behind them, making no effort to hide their inattention to Tyler. When she returned to her office after the meeting, Tyler was confronted by the building union representative and eight other teachers, each ready to hand in a completed grievance form. How, she wondered, had they had time to fill out grievance forms on the first morning of school? It was, she saw clearly, organized harassment. When she left the office, she saw Anthony removing a hallway bulletin board display. "The teachers complained about this," he said.

From September through December, Florence was a war zone. Tyler stepped up her classroom observations and began preparing files on teachers she considered incompetent or insubordinate. In turn, teachers, aided by the union representative, stepped up the barrage of grievance forms. The district supervisor, Mr. Brantly, who had hired Tyler on the basis of glowing reports from one of his advisors, tried to encourage Tyler to find a solution. Over the phone he told her, "Betty, you've got a serious problem. Now I know how teachers are and I know what you've tried to accomplish at your school. I appreciate it tremendously. But your teachers are working hard to run you out of there. They've complained to the General Superintendent about you. Some parents also complained. Do you understand the position we're both in? Now listen Betty," Mr. Brantly went on, "there must be some teachers at the school who are on your side. I suggest that you get with those people and try to turn things around."

"I've tried," she explained. "But there are only seven or eight I can work with anymore."

"No, no. You don't understand. Listen, go to the library and find this dusty old book called The Prince, by Machiavelli. Read it carefully. After you've read it, I want you to mobilize your seven or eight good teachers. Don't wait until after vacation, start

now!"

On her sofa, under her Christmas tree, those words echoed in Tyler's mind. A well-worn library book and a list of names and phone numbers lay next to her. It was late in the evening, but perhaps not too late. She picked up the phone and dialed the first number on the list.

The Prince and the Principal (B)

"Sure, no problem... you have a Merry Christmas, okay? Goodnight, Mrs. Tyler." Tom Van Pelt hung up the phone. It was midnight and he had spent the last forty minutes talking to his principal. He related the conversation to his wife, Lynn.

"That was Betty Tyler. It's strange, she wants to have a meeting next week."

"Don't you always have a meeting the first week after..."

"No, I mean next week, before New Year's. And not everybody, just a few teachers, over at Ray Harshaw's..."

"Some kind of party?"

"Not hardly," answered Tom, amused by the irony of his wife's question. "She's upset."

"From what you've told me over the past year, she's got good reason to be."

"I guess upset isn't the word. Determined is more like it. I haven't heard her talk this way in a long time. She's seemed kind of depressed lately. with all those old women making her life so miserable..."

Tom had seemed depressed lately, too, thought Lynn. She knew how much he liked and respected his principal, and how excited he used to get over ideas and projects that the two of them would plan for the school. And she remembered the day, the previous fall, when Tom came home upset after an afternoon staff meeting. Several of his colleagues had displayed such a lack of attention and respect for Mrs. Tyler that he had, "wanted to get up and give her a hug right there on the spot."

When Tom had begun teaching at Florence three years ago, he would tell Lynn about events inside his classroom: his students' progress, attitude, behavior, etc. Tom hoped to become an administrator, and his observations had lately turned towards

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the teaching methods and behaviors of other teachers. Frequently, he told Lynn "horror stories" of unprofessional and even bizarre conduct by Florence staff members. Lynn came to see that Mrs. Tyler had become something of a role model for Tom, and that he was beginning to share her frustrations over the conditions of the school.

Lynn had nearly fallen asleep when Tom spoke suddenly, "You know, Betty's got some teachers over there who really support her and appreciate what she's trying to do. We've been kind of holding back and not saying too much about some of the stuff going on. We're walking on eggshells over there. Maybe it's time we broke some."

A week later, Tom and six other teachers had the first meeting of what came to be known as "The Team." Its members included Ray Harshaw, Rita Burns, and Donna Slater, the three who had attended the Administrators' Academy with Tom and Tyler.

Tom and the others knew Tyler as a woman who spoke emphatically at a meeting or calmly on a one-to-one basis. Now, she tried to do both, and there was an emotional tension in her voice. As others spoke, the meeting took on a therapeutic quality, each sharing their feelings and frustrations over the situation at Florence.

Much of the discussion focused on the "old guard." These were the eight or nine teachers who had been at Florence so long that, in Tom's words, "they must have come in with the bricks." Ray Harshaw told how one of them did nothing all day long but, "pass out worksheets and paddle kids."

"At least she passes out worksheets," replied Donna. "The woman next door to me hardly does that. And every time I go by there she's got pizza or doughnuts or Kentucky Fried Chicken sitting up on her desk." For the first time, laughter broke through the tension and the group began to feel that the meeting had become a friendly gathering. The refreshments began to attract attention, as one team member announced, "I believe I will have a small glass of wine cooler."

Less than a week later, the team met again, this time at a local restaurant. Having finished reading The Prince, Tyler spoke resolutely about power and strategies for seizing and holding it at Florence. Others spoke up and the team discussed ideas and goals. "The fact that we stand for something gives us some power in itself," commented

Rita Burns. "The old guard teachers don't really stand for anything."

"But they do have strong support in the community," replied Donna. "Look at who controls the Parent Advisory Council and the PTA. You see the same ten or twelve parents and teachers showing up at all those meetings."

"It seems to me," suggested Tyler, "that you've just helped us to identify two important targets."

"How about the union?" added Ray. "We've got thirty-one voting members. At least nine of them are definitely against us, including the union rep., and they're quite influential with the other members." Tyler needed little reminding about the union. She had a file drawer full of petty grievances, and their number grew every week.

After a moment, Tom spoke up. "Okay, now we've got something to think about. We agreed that we want Florence to be more academically stimulating to students. Well, the PAC is sitting on over a hundred thousand dollars of ECIA money." The money he referred to consisted of federal grants for compensatory education resulting from the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981. The existing Parent Advisory Council, influenced by the old guard, had indeed spent much of the money on a mimeograph machine and on the salary of the School-Community Representative.

"We agree that we want Florence to be a safer, more nurturing place for Florence's students," continued Tom, "but we've got teachers who won't supervise their kids, and a union that opposed closing campus at lunchtime." Although Tyler had closed campus "by fiat" the previous spring, she was unable to continue the policy after summer vacation, because it would require PTA support and union approval.

It was near closing time in the restaurant when Tyler summarized the team's accomplishments and what lay ahead. "We've got a mission here, people. Like Rita says, we stand for something. But we've also got an enemy standing in the way." It was the first time anyone had used the word "enemy," and the word seemed appropriate. "Now, we've got some untapped resources. For example, with over six hundred students, we must have at least eight or nine hundred parents out there. If we can persuade just one hundred of them to support us, we'll outnumber our opposition on the PAC and PTA by

nearly ten to one. If we can build that kind of power base outside Florence, we can also be extremely persuasive inside the school. If we all show some leadership, I think we'll win over those teachers who are sitting on the sidelines.

"This will be a tremendous challenge for all of us. Over the coming weeks, I'm going to follow certain teachers around with a clipboard and write down every unprofessional act or contract violation I see. I'm going to be inside their classrooms so much that they'll think I'm part of the furniture.

"This could put a lot of pressure on you all, but we've got to work together. We've got to be more together, better organized, and sneakier than the people we're fighting against."

Heads nodded in agreement. "This sounds like a war," someone commented.

"That's right," said Tyler. "Tonight we're declaring war."

Tom left the meeting encouraged but a little uneasy, a little doubtful. What kind of atmosphere, he wondered, will we create at Florence? What if we fail? The long stretch through June might be stressful, and lonely too, if the support doesn't come from parents and other teachers. Through his doubts, however, Tom kept remembering words like "mission," "organized," and "sneakier."

The next morning Tom arrived at school early, as did Tyler and the rest of the team. He walked past the stairs that led to his second floor classroom, and continued down the hall to the Parent Room. He unlocked the door, and, with screwdriver in hand, walked to the television at the end of the room, removed the back panel, and delicately took out a small tube. He pocketed it, replaced the panel, and headed to his classroom.

The Prince and the Principal (C)

"The Team" at Florence developed and pursued a strategy of mobilizing parent support and actively challenging the power bases of obstructionist teachers. These included the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), the teachers' union, and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

To gain control of the PAC, the team distributed fliers that read, "Help us decide how to spend $200,000 on your kids! Come to our next Parent Advisory Council meeting!" The $200,000 consisted of the ECIA Chapter One money. Over one hundred parents responded to the flier. Having prepared its own informal agenda for the meeting, the team proposed specific ways of spending the money: new materials, supplies, computers, field trips, etc. A team spokesperson added, "Or, you can use the money to pay the salary of our current School-Community Representative." Most of the audience had never even heard of the representative. They gave overwhelming approval to the team's proposals.

The team's next action was to force a new election for teachers' union representative by invoking a union rule (a technicality) that permitted a challenge of the results of the previous election. Tom Van Pelt won the new election by a sixteen to fifteen vote.

To achieve control of the PTA, the team pushed the issue of whether or not Florence should close its campus at lunchtime. Again mobilizing parent support, the team packed a PTA meeting with parents who were tired of children "running the neighborhood." They voted to close the campus.

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The decision to close the campus could not go into effect, however, without teacher approval. After lengthy discussion, a vote was scheduled. Team members and their supporters assumed that they would win, as before, by one vote. But a tragic turn of events appeared to threaten their chances. Two days before before the election, an accident took the life of the young daughter of one of their supporters. On a fifteen to fifteen vote, his fellow teachers refused to allow him to vote in absentia. On the day of the election he drove to the school and, dramatically, cast the deciding vote to close the campus.

By June of 1986, after a five month battle, the team had effectively taken power at Florence. However, the faculty remained sharply divided and morale was low, a situation that continued into the following school year. In November of 1986, the district superintendent, Mr. Brantly, gave eight Florence teachers and one secretary a choice: either accept a transfer to another school, cooperate with Betty Tyler, or face disciplinary proceedings. All nine chose the transfer.

Since that time, using a variety of strategies, Betty Tyler has forced or persuaded several other teachers to transfer or resign. Tom Van Pelt commented that the 1989-90 school year was, "the first year she wasn't trying to get rid of someone." He described Tyler as, "The greatest inspiration in my professional career. She's shown a lot of people how to be administrators."

Two members of the team are no longer teaching. Rita Burns was appointed assistant principal in 1987. Ray Harshaw left Florence that same year to become principal of a local Catholic High School.